

Canadian Dream? Politics divides views on whether Canada should accept those losing DACA status

Two-thirds say U.S. should not have ended Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program

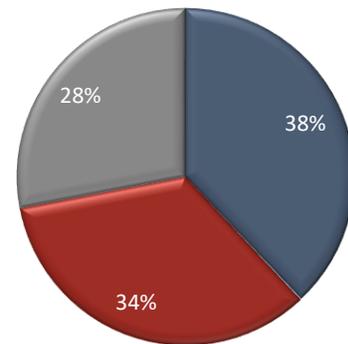
April 9, 2018 – While most Canadians say U.S. President Donald Trump was wrong to phase out DACA – the Obama-era program that allowed roughly 800,000 illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children to remain in that country legally – it doesn't mean they would invite DACA recipients to move to Canada.

A new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds two-thirds of Canadians (64%) saying America's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program should remain in place, but considerably smaller numbers saying their own country should welcome those affected by the end of the policy. Some 38 per cent say Canada should offer DACA recipients the opportunity to come here, while 34 per cent say Canada should offer no such opportunity. The rest (28%) are unsure.

Canadians' views on this question vary significantly depending on their familiarity with the DACA program, their age, and their political leanings.

Which of these perspectives is closer to your own? Would you say ...

- Canada should offer DACA recipients the opportunity to come here
- Canada should NOT offer DACA recipients the opportunity to come here
- Not sure/Can't say



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from March 27 – 29, 2018, among a representative randomized sample of 1,509 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

These findings come as [a caravan](#) of Central American asylum-seekers makes its way through Mexico to the U.S. border. Trump has equated the caravan with DACA and illegal immigration writ-large, [tweeting](#) – incorrectly – that people attempting to cross the border illegally are doing so “to take advantage” of DACA, and arguing that there should be [no Congressional deal](#) to preserve the program.

More Key Findings:

- The youngest Canadian adults – those ages 18-24 – are among those most enthusiastic about the prospect of Canada welcoming DACA recipients, while those ages 25 and older are more divided
- Those who voted for the Liberal or New Democratic parties in 2015 largely support inviting DACA recipients to come to Canada, while most of those who supported the Conservative Party say Canada should not offer such an opportunity

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- Overall, awareness of this issue in Canada is relatively low, with one-in-four (24%) saying they haven't seen or heard anything about it, and another 29 per cent "just scanning the headlines"

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Should Canada welcome Dreamers?

The people at the centre of this debate are sometimes called "Dreamers," a name that references the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act from which they would benefit. First proposed in 2001, but never passed, the DREAM Act would offer legal status and a path to citizenship for people who were brought to the United States illegally as children, as long as they met certain requirements.

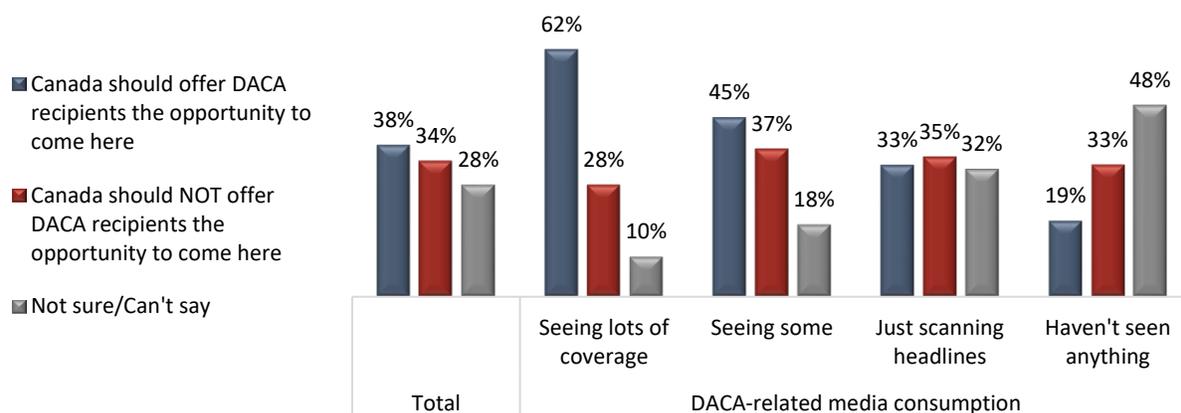
Former President Barack Obama created DACA through an executive order in 2012. It protected [a subset of Dreamers](#) who had been in the U.S. since 2007, arrived in the country before turning 16, and were under age 31 on the day the order was signed. The Trump administration announced in September that it would [phase out the program](#) by no longer accepting new DACA applications or renewals.

Roughly 800,000 people applied for protection from deportation under DACA, and some 690,000 [still had legal status](#) in the country under the program at the time Trump rescinded it. When their status expires, these individuals will once again be considered illegal immigrants, and could be deported.

As mentioned in the key findings, relatively few Canadians say they have been closely monitoring this situation. Roughly one-in-seven (14%) say they are seeing lots of media coverage of the DACA debate and discussing it with friends and family. That's a lower number than the Angus Reid Institute [typically sees](#) when asking this question about Canadian domestic issues.

When provided with an explanation of the issue and asked whether Canada should offer DACA recipients who are going to lose their status in the U.S. the opportunity to come to this country instead, Canadians are divided, overall. That said, those paying closest attention are significantly more enthusiastic about welcoming Dreamers to Canada than those who have been less engaged with this news story:

Which of these perspectives is closer to your own? Would you say ...



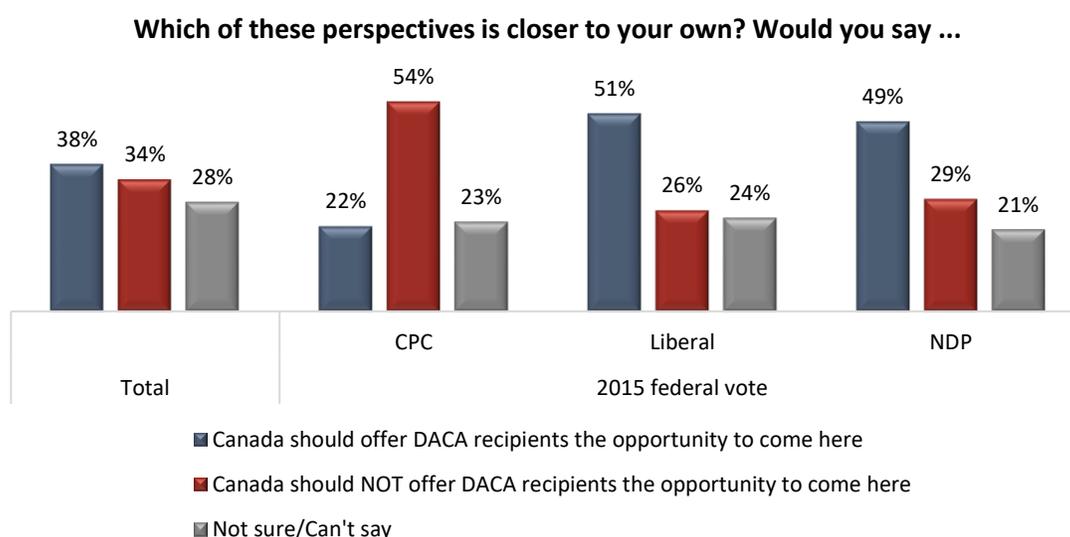
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Age and partisanship are key drivers of opinion

Beyond awareness of the issue, the biggest driver of opinion on this question is political partisanship. Those who cast ballots for Justin Trudeau and the Liberals in 2015 say Canada should invite DACA recipients to come to this country by a nearly two-to-one margin (51% versus 26%). Past supporters of the NDP are also more inclined to say Canada should take these Dreamers than to say it should not.

Among those who voted for the CPC in 2015, however, the ratio is reversed: A full majority (54%) say Canada should not offer DACA recipients the opportunity to come here, more than twice as many as say Canada should welcome them, as seen in the following graph:



These political divisions mirror those the Angus Reid Institute has recorded on questions about immigration and refugee policy in the past. In 2016, past CPC voters were [much less enthusiastic](#) about the Trudeau government's Syrian refugee resettlement plan than past Liberals and New Democrats.

That said, [other 2016 polling](#) found partisans largely in agreement on the notion that immigration policies should give priority to Canada's economic needs, rather than to people in crisis abroad.

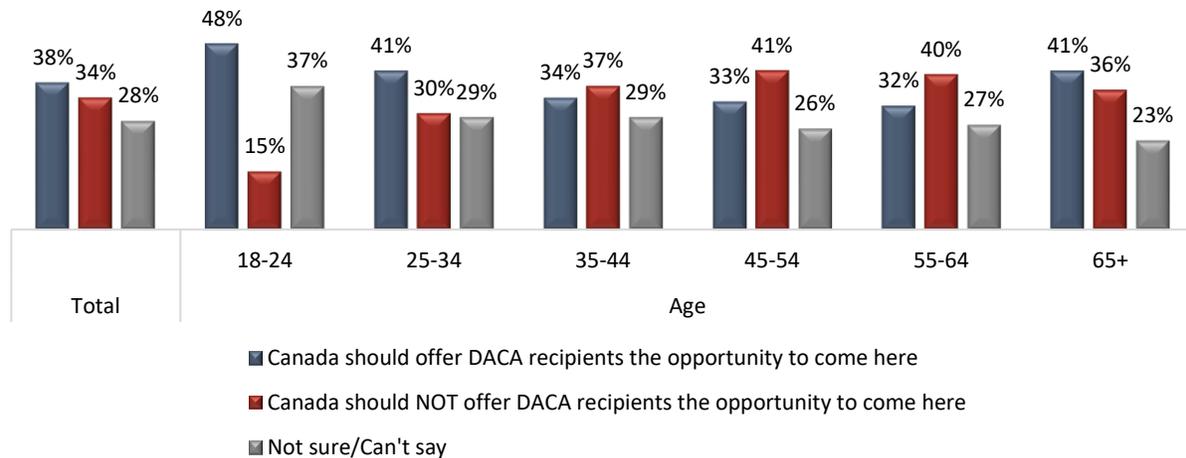
Related: [Open-door policy? Majority support government decision not to increase 2017 refugee targets](#)

Another group of Canadians that is particularly enthusiastic about bringing these Dreamers to Canada is respondents under age 25. Nearly half (48%) of this group says Canada should offer DACA recipients the opportunity to migrate north of the border, and fewer than one-in-six (15%) say Canada should make no such offer. This is a marked difference from how Canadians of other ages view this question, as seen in the graph that follows.

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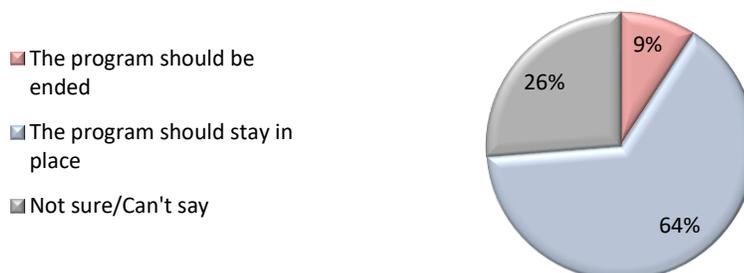
Regional differences on this question are more muted, with British Columbia (42%), Quebec (40%), and Atlantic Canada (45%) most likely to say Canada should take DACA recipients and Alberta (30%), Ontario (35%), and Manitoba (36%) least likely ([see comprehensive tables for greater detail](#)).

Most say U.S. should keep DACA in place

Numerous commentators [have pointed out](#) that Trump's recent tweets on the subject of DACA suggest that the president doesn't actually know what the policy is or does.

Many Canadians may be similarly confused about the program, but when they are presented with a brief explanation of how it works and who it benefits, they overwhelmingly support leaving it in place. Fewer than one-in-ten (9%) take Trump's position that it should be ended:

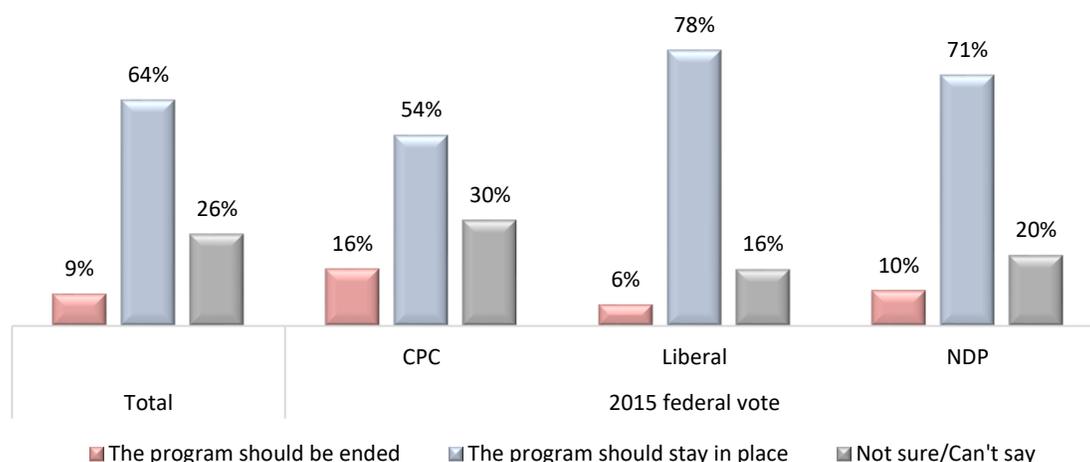
Based on whatever you have seen or heard about DACA, would you say ...



Notably, views on whether the U.S. should continue DACA are much more consistent across age and partisan lines than views on whether Canada should be welcoming DACA recipients.

Full majorities of each party's 2015 supporters say the policy should stay in place, as do full majorities across all ages and regions (see the graph that follows and [comprehensive tables](#)).

Based on whatever you have seen or heard about DACA, would you say ...



*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Summary tables follow. For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

Which of these perspectives is closer to your own? Would you say ...					
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (1509)	Awareness of media coverage of the DACA debate			
		Seeing lots of coverage (212)	Seeing some coverage (500)	Just scanning the headlines (435)	Haven't seen or heard anything (362)
Canada should offer DACA recipients the opportunity to come here	38%	62%	45%	33%	19%
Canada should NOT offer DACA recipients the opportunity to come here	34%	28%	37%	35%	33%
Not sure/Can't say	28%	10%	18%	32%	48%